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The situation in the Middle East

Measures to eliminate international terrorism

Security Council
Fifty-seventh year

Letter dated 22 October 2002 from the Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I am writing to draw your attention to the latest incident of Palestinian terrorism directed against the citizens of Israel.

Yesterday afternoon, at the height of the rush hour, near the Israeli city of Hadera, Palestinian suicide bombers collided a vehicle packed with powerful explosives with a public bus bound for Tel Aviv. The initial damage was limited to the rear of the bus, which sustained the brunt of the explosion, and several passengers were able to escape. Those in the rear, however, were trapped by the flames and were eventually killed when the gasoline tank caught fire and ignited a massive explosion. That explosion completely destroyed the bus, along with several other nearby vehicles, and scattered debris over a wide area. In total, 14 Israelis were killed in the attack and more than 40 others were injured, among them several children who were in a car near the bus at the time of the explosion. The Syrian-based Islamic Jihad claimed responsibility for the attack.

Israel holds the Palestinian leadership fully responsible for yesterday's repugnant attack, as it does for all terrorist attacks emanating from the territory under its control. The Palestinian leadership has manifestly failed to fulfil its responsibilities to end all acts of terrorism and to prevent its territory from serving as a base for attacks on civilians. Israel further holds the Government of Syria responsible, in the light of its ongoing support for terrorist organizations, including providing them with safe harbour, as well as financial, logistical and political support, in defiance of Security Council resolutions, including resolution 1373 (2001).

The Palestinian leadership has thus far failed to take any steps to fulfil its responsibilities under the recently adopted resolution 1435 (2002), which demands an end to all acts of violence, terrorism and incitement, and calls for those responsible for terrorist acts to be brought to justice. Rather than fulfilling its

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obligations to fight terrorism, the Palestinian security forces have focused their efforts instead on targeting so-called "collaborators", one of whom, Walid Hamdiyeh, was sentenced to death this past Friday in a trial that lasted just a few hours. It is clear that the failure to act against known terrorists is not a failure of ability, but rather of political will.

To distract attention from its failure to live up to its commitments, the Palestinian side continues to accuse Israel of defying the Security Council, deliberately ignoring the many Security Council calls for Palestinian action that have been blatantly ignored. Even as the Council calls for steps to be taken to fight Palestinian terrorism, the Palestinian Authority continues to encourage, finance and support such attacks. Even as the international community calls for an end to violence and incitement, the Palestinian Authority continues to justify attacks as acts of "legitimate resistance".

So long as the Palestinian leadership defends acts of terrorism against Israelis as being legitimate, these attacks are sure to continue. It is therefore imperative that the international community condemn in the strongest terms suicide bombings and other criminal acts of terrorism, as well as the ongoing support and involvement of the current Palestinian leadership in such acts.

Israel further calls upon the Palestinian leadership to fulfil its obligations to arrest terrorist leaders and bring them to justice, as required by resolution 1435 (2002), and to end incitement in the official media and all financial, logistical and moral support for acts of terrorism, in accordance with its signed commitments and the resolutions of the Security Council, in particular resolution 1373 (2001). Only an end to the heinous campaign of Palestinian terrorism, with its terrible cost in Israeli and Palestinian lives, can restore hope of achieving a lasting settlement between Israelis and Palestinians.

I submit this letter in follow-up to numerous letters detailing the campaign of Palestinian terrorism that began in September 2000.

I should be grateful if you would arrange to have the text of this letter circulated as an official document of the fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly, under agenda items 160 and 36, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Yehuda **Lancry**
Permanent Representative